

Special City Council Meeting of September 27, 2004
Belmont City Hall, 1070 Sixth Avenue, Conference Room 200

CALL TO ORDER 7:05 P.M.

ROLL CALL

COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: Warden, Feierbach, Mathewson, Bauer, Metropulos

COUNCILMEMBERS ABSENT: None

Staff Present: Human Resources Director Dolan, City Attorney Savaree, City Clerk Cook

Discussion and Direction Regarding Selection of Executive Search Firm for City Manager Position

Human Resources Director Dolan described the interview procedure. She noted that Council could use the questions provided, or use its own questions. She clarified that the criteria she utilized for selecting the three firms to interview included cost, references, type of experience, and location. She added that two firms have experience in Belmont for the recruitment for City Manager and several department heads. She noted that refunds are common if Council is not happy with the final candidate, but clarified there is no refund if the firm is not used for the full recruitment process.

In response to Council questions, Human Resources Director Dolan clarified that internal applicants are treated the same as others. She noted that Interim City Manager Rich would not be participating as a staff member in this process, unless he did not become a finalist. The candidate interview procedure usually involves department heads at some point. She noted that if Council does not support any of the finalists, the alternates may be considered. She clarified the search firm should keep working to find candidates, but this could increase costs for the additional time spent.

Human Resources Director Dolan noted that reimbursement expenses are different for all three firms, and that Council should consider the firm with whom they felt most comfortable.

Paul Kimura

Mr. Kimura provided background on his firm. He noted his is the third largest company in the State for public sector recruitment. He stated his high-tech background gives a unique perspective. He provided some personal background, and noted that being born and raised in the Bay Area is valuable in local recruitment. He described his recent experience with City Manager

recruitment in Vallejo and Pittsburg, both of which were difficult. He noted that the average turnover for city managers is five years.

Mr. Kimura provided details regarding his fee schedule. He clarified that he would meet with individual Councilmembers to develop a profile, and would perform outreach using advertising and contact lists. He would assess candidates prior to making a recommendation to Council, and would manage salary discussions. He noted that his reimbursables included printing and travel costs, and clarified that the only additional costs would be for additional services following the hiring, such as goal setting, if desired.

Mr. Kimura noted that it takes 100 contacts to obtain six candidates, and that the process involves marketing Belmont to candidates.

In response to questions regarding performing a partial recruitment, Mr. Kimura clarified that this would be limited to outreach. He also clarified that there is a cost savings for partial recruitment, but the disadvantage would be loss of continuity, that details can fall through the cracks, and the turnaround time can be extensive between steps. He noted that candidates find it easier to work with a recruiter rather than in-house recruitment. He noted that his fees could be reduced by \$1500 if printing is done in-house. He added that his experience is that partial recruitment searches have not gone as well as full-service searches.

In response to Council questions, Mr. Kimura stated that a blue-ribbon committee interview process could be effective if the process is well defined. He stated that if the top choice does not meet Council's desire, he would continue working to finish the assignment. He suggested defining the role of the department heads early in the process for a group interview session.

(Bobbie) Peckham and McKenney

Ms. Peckham provided information on her background, including Belmont experience with recruitment for city manager and several department heads. She stated that her partnership is new, but that she has experience both in private and public sector. She noted that she has 12 years of experience in city manager recruitment, mostly in smaller cities in California and other western states.

Ms. Peckham clarified that her services included developing a profile by working with department heads and the community, she would interview and reference check, would facilitate the final interviews, salary negotiations, and other followup. She noted that she and her partner perform all functions, as

opposed to using junior staff. She clarified that her fees were inclusive except for out-of-pocket fees such as advertising, unless additional services were requested, such as goal setting. She noted that her firm offers competitive pricing, and that in order to provide quality service, it does not take on more than eight recruitments at the same time.

In response to Council questions, Ms. Peckham clarified that her methodology included posting the position, outreach to existing city managers and assistant city managers, and followup calls. She noted that she generally makes 100 calls and emails for each position, and often receives references to interested candidates. She added that followup phone calls are the most successful, as a potential candidate may not have otherwise considered the position.

In response to Council questions regarding partial recruitment, Ms. Peckham stated that this method can be successful for department head recruitment, but not for city manager recruitment. She clarified that candidates are more comfortable dealing with a recruiter, and are more inclined to remain through the process. She added that using a recruiter validates the seriousness of the recruitment, and keeps staff out of politics, especially for in-house candidates.

Ms. Peckham stated that she treats internal candidates the same as others, which they usually appreciate. She noted that a recruiter is able to provide an unbiased opinion, since the internal candidate has an edge over others.

In response to questions regarding a partial recruitment, she stated her fees would range from \$11,000 - \$12,000. She clarified that City staff would handle the final interviews, but there were no guarantees. She expressed concern that good candidates may drop out if the recruiter drops out. She stated there could be a loss of continuity, which may prove to be more costly than the money saved.

She noted that she usually follows up with the Mayor approximately a year following a placement. She added that she often sees successful candidates at conferences.

Bob Murray

Mr. Murray gave details of his background of 20 years of recruitment experience, which includes 150 city manager recruitments in the western states. He stated his focus is on need, not the bottom line. He outlined his Bay Area experience, and noted that he is familiar with the challenges of living in this

region. He stated that he performs aggressive outreach. He added that he had five years of law enforcement background before he was recruited to be the first City Manager of Olympia, Washington.

Mr. Murray commented that all firms provide similar services. He interviews Councilmembers individually, determines long-term needs, and values community and staff input on development of the candidate profile. He brings a network of contacts to identify candidates, and clarified that the best candidate is probably not actively seeking another position. He obtains a fresh group of candidates for each recruitment, interviews the best candidates, performs reference checks, and recommends finalists. He sends brochures to create a buzz and provide exposure to the position. He follows up with 100 calls in addition to networking.

Mr. Murray noted that the average tenure of a city manager is five years. He noted that candidates usually do not apply unless there is a recruiter involved, since a recruiter provides confidentiality and accessibility to candidates. He noted that he has more experience than other firms, especially for city manager recruitments, and that he has a good reputation in the field. He added that he has occasionally been hired as a recruiter for those not hired during the process.

In response to questions regarding partial recruitment, Mr. Murray noted that there is a benefit of full-service recruitment, since timing can be an issue, and in-house staff may not have the ability to penetrate the market or perform networking. He stated that he uses the same evaluation method for internal candidates, but that he will meet with the candidate at the outset of the process.

Mr. Murray stated that he would exercise care in using community leaders for the interview process. His recommendation is to use them, if desired, for the second round of interviews for the finalists to review strengths and weaknesses, and to offer an opinion on a finalist.

(End of Interviews)

Council discussion ensued regarding the interviews.

Councilmember Mathewson stated that he likes the fact that Paul Kimura is local, but noted that the other firms have Belmont experience.

Councilmember Feierbach stated that she favored both Paul Kimura and Bob Murray, that involving the community in the process is important, and that the length of service of other placements by the recruiter is a factor.

Councilmember Warden stated that he favored Mr. Murray. He noted that he was not aware of any followup by Ms. Peckham following the previous city manager search, as described, and using junior staff is not an issue. He noted that Mr. Murray has a variety of experiences, was himself a city manager, and understands the needs. He stated that the City would be paying him for his level of contacts, and the respect that he has in the field.

Councilmember Bauer stated that he also favored both Paul Kimura and Bob Murray. He appreciated Mr. Kimura's continuity and confidence, and personally liked Mr. Murray. He agreed with Councilmember Warden regarding contacts and respect.

Mayor Metropulos stated that he favored Bob Murray. He commented that he not only talks the talk, but walks the walk, is peacefully aggressive, anticipated questions, and understands City Council perspective. He also supports involving the community in the process.

Human Resources Director Dolan stated that experience showed in Mr. Murray's answers, and she is aware he has a good reputation in the field.

Council concurred that their primary choice was Bob Murray. Direction was given to hire his firm for the full recruitment process, pending reference checks, and to place this item on the next Council agenda to formalize.

ADJOURNMENT at this time, being 9:28 P.M.

Terri Cook

Belmont City Clerk

Meeting Tape Recorded but not Videotaped

Tape Number 589